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UNCLAS PARAMARIBO 000321

SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

WHA/CAR FOR RENEE RAGIN, IO/PPC FOR MARK SCHLACHTER AND
SUSAN POULIN

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [AORC](#) [UNSC](#) [UNGA](#) [PREL](#) [NS](#)
SUBJECT: BABY STEPS: SURINAME'S UN VOTES BEGIN TO REFLECT
HUMAN RIGHTS PRINCIPLES

REF: SECSTATE 55178

¶1. (U) As requested reftel, on August 11 PolOff delivered a copy of the "UN Voting Record Report" and demarche message to Government of Suriname (GOS) Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Acting Head of the International Organizations Division Chantal Elsenhout.

¶2. (SBU) While Elsenhout stressed she could not speak officially on the subject of UN votes, she assured PolOff she would see to it the message regarding an expectation of greater voting coincidence will be delivered to decision makers. She also repeatedly assured PolOff each vote is decided on a "case-by-case" basis. Elsenhout said she personally was sympathetic to the U.S.'s appeal that friendly relations between Suriname and the United States should be reflected in voting at the UN.

¶3. (SBU) Upon discussion, Elsenhout said she could not see the rationale for the GOS's "yes" vote on the Cuba embargo resolution in 2007.

¶4. (SBU) Elsenhout spoke at length about the process by which certain GOS votes at the UN were determined. She said sometimes the GOS UN Ambassador makes the decision, but that more often decisions are taken at the MFA, and sometimes decisions go as high as the President. Referring to one 2007 vote in which the U.S. had an interest, Elsenhout said there was quite a bit of back and forth within the GOS delegation in New York, and that the "visit of the U.S. Ambassador to demarche" positively influenced the eventual GOS decision. Elsenhout was not clear on which U.S. Ambassador she was referring to. Elsenhout was also not sure which vote it was; she thought originally it was a vote on Iran, but eventually agreed with PolOff that it may have been the decision by the GOS to abstain on a Burma vote.

¶5. (U) Post will inform Washington of any further information from the GOS.

¶6. (SBU) COMMENT. Post confirms that Elsenhout was referring to the GOS's votes in the Third Committee in November 2007, when the GOS broke with its prior voting records and abstained on the no-action motion on the country specific Burma human rights resolution, and then voted for the resolution. Ambassador Schreiber Hughes was in close contact with Ambassador Robby Ramlakhan (MFA Head of Integration Processes Division) and the GOS's new Ambassador to the UN, Henry Mac Donald, in influencing the GOS decision. Also possibly influencing the welcome GOS action on Burma was the fact that Mac Donald had been a human rights attorney by profession--something Elsenhout mentioned as well. END
COMMENT
SCHREIBER HUGHES